

Home Circle.

THE READING OF THE WORD.

A few striking incidents have recently come to our knowledge, from over the sea, of how simple reading of the New Testament, without a word of comment, has been blessed to the conversion of individuals of God's ancient people, the Jews. A young Israelite in the Crimea, a highly cultivated man, and thoroughly instructed in his own faith, became acquainted with several Christian families, and conceived the idea of writing a novel in which the families of the Jews and Christians should be contracted. The better to understand the latter, and had not long studied it before he became convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah of his people.

In Berlin a Hebrew artist, desiring to find new subjects for pictures, began to search for them in the New Testament. As he read, the moral beauty of the Saviour made a deep impression upon him. The more he read, the deeper was the impression, until he came to the profound conviction that Jesus was the son of God.

Such, when once they begin to study it, is the influence of the New Testament upon those who have never known it. And yet how many of us Christians, who fancy we know it well, fail to find any decided evidence in our lives that we are gaining anything from it. We read it, but we do not grow by it. Is the reason that we are looking in it rather for doctrines, for truth, perhaps we may call it, than for Jesus Christ, who is the truth? To know him, this is life eternal.—*American Messenger*.

A GENTLE BOY.

Vincent Ray lived in a beautiful home. The rooms had handsome chairs and tables, and potted plants made it seem like summer all the year round.

He had the kindest papa and mamma. You would think there wasn't a thing lacking, but there was. He was the only boy, and had no little sister.

That explains the doll. Arabella was such a comfort.

"I'd call her Mary," suggested Mrs. Ray, the day she was bought.

"Oh! mamma, Mary is such an every-day kind of a name."

"I think it is the sweetest name in the world," said mamma, "but take any other you like."

Where in his short life he had picked up "Arabella," nobody knew, but that was his choice.

"I'm afraid he'll be just a girl-boy if he plays with dolls," said Aunt Emma.

"Well, I'm not a bit afraid of it. I mean to make Arabella an object-lesson. She shall teach him gentleness. A gentle boy makes a gentle-man."

So doll Arabella became a real little sister to Vincent; as much as she could and not be alive. She shared all his joys and sorrows, his one regret being that she couldn't go to Sunday-school. She had the lessons, though. They studied together beforehand, and afterward he repeated what the teacher said, as near as he could remember.

"Now, Arabella, listen. We're to do as we'd like to be *dood* to. That means I must love you, an' not hit you, 'cause I'd hate to have you hit me." (What a make-believe!)

It was good, though, to get such a thought fixed, and if Vincent ever has a live little sister, she will be the happier because he played first with Arabella, who couldn't strike back.—*Helen A. Hawley*.

THE CHRISTMAS DREAM.

Strange that any boy could be six years old, and never see a Christmas tree, but Robert Gleason had never set eyes on one.

Christmas trees seldom grow in mining towns. No mamma since he was a baby. His papa dead now, and Bob sent back to be Grandma Gleason's joy.

How delightful to his cousins, to tell him things!

"What! Never saw a Christmas tree!" said Stuart, the superior.

"Never saw a Christmas tree!" echoed Maxwell.

"I think he'd be as'amed;" this was Susie, who was little and didn't know better.

"Couldn't," reproved her brother; "there wasn't any."

Robert took heart. "What's it like?"

"It's a small evergreen. We're going to have one. Grandma said so. It'll be in the parlor. There'll be lots on it—oranges, candles, balls, drums, books, brownies"—

"An' dolls, an' candy," put in Susie.

"And flags, and pop-corn,—I can't begin to tell!"

"For us? Jolly!" Which didn't half express Maxwell's feelings.

'T wasn't strange that when Bob fell asleep in the arm-chair that afternoon, he dreamed of a wonderful tree which bore fruit, as Stuart said. He was so happy, it woke him.

"Grandma," he said, "I've dreamed the Christmas tree! But there was one thing Stuart didn't tell. Away at the top a bright star shone. Do you think—do

you think," eagerly, "it was the wise men's star?"

"I think," Grandma answered softly, "your star meant the same as that one long ago. It was to lead my boy to the Babe born on Christmas Day, and to make him see above all other beautiful gifts, God's gift of his Son."—*Helen A. Hawley*.

"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS."

A busy woman entered her room hastily as twilight shades were falling, went directly to her desk, turned on the gas, and began to write. Page after page she wrote; five minutes she worked, ten, half an hour. The solitude became oppressive. She wheeled her chair around, and, with a shock of joyful surprise looked squarely into the smiling face of her dearest friend lying on the lounge by her side.

"Why, I didn't know you were here!" she cried. "Why didn't you speak to me?"

"Because you were so busy. You didn't speak to me."

So with Jesus—here all the time. The room is full of Him, always ready to greet us with a smile—but we are so busy! But when the solitude grows oppressive—and there are heart solitudes that can be only broken as we let this dearest Friend speak—we suddenly turn, and lo! He is at our side. We speak to Him, and He speaks to us, and the soul's deepest yearnings are completely satisfied.—*Selected*.

BE DECIDED.

Why not be out and out for God? What good is there in the half-and-half life? Is it not better to settle some questions once for all? Most surely the question of our allegiance to the Lord ought to be so settled that it shall never again be counted open. He whose loyalty is in any way left doubtful gives encouragement to the enemy, and prepares for himself endless trouble. It is better to have it out with Satan in a pitched battle wherein all the forces of both sides are brought on to the field, and where the adversary gets so overwhelmingly crushed that he loses all desire for a repetition of that sort of thing. A resolute life is in every way a gain; it is the admiration of angels, and the reproduction of Christ.—*Zion's Herald*.

THE prudent sees only the difficulties; the bold only the advantages, of the great enterprise; the hero sees both, diminishes those, makes these predominate, and conquers.—*Lavater*.

NATURE never says that which wisdom will contradict.—*Juvenal*.